IN THE CLAIMS

For the convenience of the Examiner, all pending claims of the present Application are shown below whether or not an amendment has been made.

1.   (Currently Amended) A system for interfacing between signaling protocols, comprising:

a gateway operable to receive signaling information in a message based signaling format from a Class 5 softswitch, the gateway operable to receive voice signals from a public switched telephone network, the gateway operable to place the voice signals into data packets for transfer to an Internet Protocol network with the signaling information to establish a call connection from a public switched telephone network user to an Internet Protocol network user.

2.   (Original) The system of Claim 1, wherein the gateway is operable to receive signaling information in a media gateway control protocol format.

3.   (Original) The system of Claim 1, wherein the data packets and the signaling information are transferred over a common physical link.

4.   (Original) The system of Claim 1, wherein the data packets and the signaling information are transferred over separate logical links.

5.   (Original) The system of Claim 1, wherein the gateway is operable to receive signaling information in a H.248 protocol format.

6.   (Original) The system of Claim 1, wherein the gateway is operable to receive signaling information in a signaling interface protocol format.

7.   (Original) The system of Claim 1, further comprising: a Class 5 softswitch operable to receive signaling information in a network signaling format, the Class 5 switch operable to convert the network signaling format to the message based signaling format.

8.   (Original) The system of Claim 7, wherein the network signaling format is a SS7 signaling format.

9.   (Original) The system of Claim 7, wherein the network signaling format is a C7 signaling format.

10.   (Original) The system of 7, wherein the gateway is operable to provide signaling information to the Class 5 softswitch in the message based signaling format, the Class 5 softswitch operable to convert the message based signaling format to the network signaling format.

11.   (Currently Amended) A method for interfacing signaling information and voice traffic, comprising:
    receiving signaling information in a message based signaling format at a gateway from a Class 5 softswitch;
    receiving voice traffic from an inter-machine trunk;
    placing the voice traffic into data packets;
    transferring the data packets and the signaling information to an Internet Protocol network to establish a call connection from a public switched telephone network user to an Internet Protocol network user.

12. (Original) The method of Claim 11, wherein the data packets and the signaling information are transferred over a common physical link.

13. (Original) The method of Claim 11, wherein the data packets and the signaling information are transferred over separate logical links.

14. (Original) The method of Claim 11, wherein the message based signaling format follows one of a media gateway control protocol, H.248 protocol, or signaling interface protocol.

15. (Original) The method of Claim 11, further comprising:

eliminating any link between the Class 5 softswitch and the Internet Protocol network.

16. (Currently Amended) A method for interfacing signaling information and voice traffic, comprising:

receiving signaling information in a message based signaling format and data packets carrying voice traffic at a gateway from an Internet Protocol network to establish a call connection from an Internet Protocol network user to a public switched telephone network user;

extracting the voice traffic from the data packets;

providing the voice traffic to an inter-machine trunk;

providing the signaling information to a Class 5 softswitch.

17. (Original) The method of Claim 16, wherein the data packets and the signaling information are received on a common physical link.

18.   (Original) The method of Claim 16, wherein the data packets and the signaling information are received on separate logical links.

19.   (Original) The method of Claim 16, wherein the message based signaling format follows one of a media gateway control protocol, H.248 protocol, or signaling interface protocol.

20.   (Original) The method of Claim 16, wherein the Internet Protocol network has no link to the Class 5 softswitch other than through the gateway.